

EZEKIEL: BLOSSOMING DURING LIFE'S MOST SEVERE CRISES

Part XIII: God's Work To Use Enormous Trials To Communicate To Sin-Hardened People

(Ezekiel 24:1-27)

I. Introduction

- A. One of the most challenging objectives in making disciples is getting through to spiritually hardened people! There is a point where our best efforts have no returns. What happens then?
- B. God utilized overbearing trouble in Ezekiel's life and on Jerusalem to communicate truth to hardened people. This is a precedent for us to understand and accept as a part of discipling others.

II. God's Work To Use Enormous Trials To Communicate To Sin-Hardened People, Ez. 24:1-27:

- A. On the exact day that Nebuchanezzar began the siege of Jerusalem far away, the Lord told Ezekiel to mark that day, January 15, 588 B.C. (Liberal theologians have been forced by this prediction to state that either Ezekiel had supernatural insight, or he was outright lying as no one could have known the date of the siege in Babylon by natural means until long after the siege began, cf. McGee, Thru The Bible With J. Vernon McGee, vol. 3, p. 483.)
- B. There was a parable given by God to Ezekiel in relationship to this event: Jerusalem is likened to a boiling pot full of food where the boiling of the food brings refuse in the food to the top. This refuse pictures the sins of the people in the city. So contaminated was the food that the contents of the pot **together with the pot** would have to be destroyed, showing the need for the city of Jerusalem to be destroyed along with the slaying of the wicked people in it, Ez. 24:2-13.
- C. Because Jerusalem's sin had reached a point of no return, God promised that He would no longer turn back. The judgment had begun to fall, and it would continue until God's wrath was finished, v. 14.
- D. In keeping with this awesome prediction, God informed the innocent prophet, Ezekiel, that he would have to experience an awful personal tragedy:
 1. God would take Ezekiel's beloved wife in death that same day in which Jerusalem was being destroyed so that Ezekiel could exemplify to the rest of the captives in Babylon how to mourn for their relatives who were that day being killed, Ez. 24:15-16.
 2. However, Ezekiel was not to mourn outwardly, but exemplify the silence of deep grief as all of the other captives in Babylon would likewise experience the death of relatives in Jerusalem that day, causing so much grief that people just could not show their grief outwardly, Ez. 24:17
 3. Bravely, Ezekiel shared this information in the morning with the captives, and, true to God's Word, Ezekiel experienced the loss of his dear wife that evening with a stroke, Ez. 24:18a,b.
 4. After his wife died, Ezekiel did not mourn, causing the onlookers to ask him why, Ez. 24:18c-19.
 5. Ezekiel replied that God was destroying His sanctuary and their relatives in Jerusalem then, and that their grief was going to be so great that they were going to have to follow Ezekiel's actions, 24:20-24a. **When these people had heard reports of the fulfillment of this prediction, they would realize that the Lord of Ezekiel was the true Lord, Ez. 24:24b.**
 6. The Lord indicated that Ezekiel would be silent until news came of the fall of Jerusalem from Jerusalem itself. That silence would also be a sign that **the God of Ezekiel was indeed the Lord**, 25ff

Lesson: *The traumatic events of Jerusalem's fall as coming from the hand of divine judgment would make sense to hardened captives in Babylon only as the actual tragedy took place. Accordingly, God permitted Ezekiel to see the tragic death of his innocent wife occur as a tool in communicating to these hardened people that God meant what He said through Ezekiel, and that He would judge the nation for its sins.*

Application: *There is a point where God will allow unbelievable pain and tragedy to occur to communicate truth to people. Sometimes tragedy will strike even innocent people (Ezekiel and his wife), or massive tragedy will hit lots of people (the loss of relatives of all the captives) to accomplish this fact. We need to be ready to explain to people that God means what He says when these times come--He really does!*